

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 09664 041136Z

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S E C R E T GENEVA 9664

NODIS CHEROKEE

TO THE SECRETARY FROM REINHARDT

DEPT PASS LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR RH UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: MEETING WITH NKOMO DEC 3

1. I CALLED ON JOSHUA NKOMO ON DEC 3 FOR WHAT PROVED TO BE A USEFUL AND OCCASIONALLY EMOTIONAL MEETING.
2. I ASKED NKOMO WHERE MATTERS STOOD IN GENEVA. HE REPLIED THAT TWO KEY INGREDIENTS ARE MISSING. THE BRITISH HAVE NOT DEFINED THE RESPONSIBILITIES THEY INTEND TO CARRY DURING TRANSITION AND THE RHODESIANS HAVE NOT ELABORATED ON THEIR POSITION. I ASKED NKOMO IF IN HIS JUDGMENT A COMPROMISE FORMULA FOR THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS POSSIBLE AND WHETHER HE THOUGHT THAT POWER WOULD BE SHARED IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.
3. NKOMO LAUNCHED INTO A DISCUSSION OF HIS VERSION OF HISTORY. REFERRING TO SMITH'S 24 SEPT SPEECH AND HIS MEETING WITH YOU IN LUSAKA, HE SAID THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE FACT THAT YOU HAD EXTRACTED AN AGREEMENT FOR MAJORITY RULE AND SMITH'S AGREEMENT TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE. HE HAD TOLD YOU AT THE TIME THERE WERE VERY SERIOUS FLAWS IN THE FORMULA YOU PRESENTED HIM AND HE HAD NOT AGREED WITH THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE YOU OUTLINED. HE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 GENEVA 09664 041136Z

EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO COME TO GENEVA AND WORK OUT

THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND DID NOT ACCEPT THE FACT THAT IT COULD BE PRENEGOTIATED WITH SMITH AND VORSTER. THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND EVEN THE CONCEPT OF POWER SHARING IN AN UPPER TIER WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO HIM. HE HAD NO PROBLEM WITH SMITH ADVANCING THE PROPOSALS BUT HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT THAT THEY WERE ADVANCED AS A "CONTRACT." IF ANYONE HAD EXPECTED THIS TO BE THE CASE, WE WERE AT THE "WRONG PLACE." ALL POWER MUST BE TRANSFERRED TO THE AFRICAN MAJORITY AT THE OUTSET OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS AND HE WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANYTHING SHORT OF THAT.

4. THE MECHANISM FOR TRANSFERRING POWER WOULD BE THROUGH A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WITHIN WHICH EUROPEANS COULD PARTICIPATE IN A MINORITY POSITION. IN FACT, HIS PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FORESAW EUROPEANS HOLDING 5 OUT OF 25 POSITIONS - IN OTHER WORDS, A GREATER DEGREE OF EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION THAN THEIR PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. THE CONFERENCE HAD TO DECIDE WHAT MINISTRIES SMITH'S PEOPLE WOULD GET AND THIS WAS A SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

5. CONCERNING ELECTIONS, NKOMO DID NOT AGREE WITH MUZOREWA'S PROPOSALS THAT ELECTIONS BE HELD FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. IT WAS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE DURING A 15 MONTH PERIOD TO HOLD ELECTIONS UNDER SALISBURY AUSPICES IN WHICH CONDITIONS OF WAR AND THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF GREAT NUMBERS OF NATIONALISTS PERTAINED. NKOMO ASSURED ME THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD BEFORE INDEPENDENCE WAS GRANTED.

6. I ASKED NKOMO WHAT ROLE HE SAW FOR THE BRITISH. HE SAID THAT HIS DOCUMENT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. (GENEVA 9620). BRITAIN'S ROLE WOULD BE LIMITED TO THAT OF DECOLONIZATION. THE BRITISH, HE SAID, MUST ACCEPT THE FACT THEY ARE A COLONIZING POWER. IF THEY HAVE NO POWER WITHIN RHODESIA TODAY "THAT IS THEIR FAULT." AT THE BREAKUP OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION, THE NATIONALISTS HAD PROPOSED IN THE UNITED NATIONS THAT BRITAIN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 GENEVA 09664 041136Z

ARMY AND THE POLICE BUT THE BRITISH REFUSED TO MOVE AGAINST THEIR "KITH AND KIN." IF ANYONE QUESTIONED THE LEGALITY OF NETO'S INVITATION TO THE CUBANS THE SOVIETS IN ANGOLA, NO ONE COULD QUESTION BRITISH INTERVENTION IN RHODESIA. BRITAIN HAS LEGAL TIES, BUT IF IT REFUSES TO PLAY ITS PART, THEN THE NATIONALISTS WOULD HAVE TO CONCLUDE THE BRITISH ARE NOT WILLING AND THE NATIONALISTS WOULD BE PREPARED TO FIGHT ON BY THEMSELVES.

7. NKOMO ADMITTED THAT THE ROLE HE SAW FOR THE BRITISH WAS SYMBOLIC BUT IT WAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE. "WE ARE PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY AND TAKE AN OATH TO THE QUEEN." ALL RHODESIAN TROOPS, INCLUDING ZIPA, WOULD BE PREPARED TO SWEAR AN OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE CROWN. OF COURSE, NO TROOPS COULD BE DEPLOYED BY A BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

8. REFERRING TO SMITH AND HIS ROLE DURING TRANSITION, NKOMO BECAME INCREASING EMOTIONAL. "WE ARE NOT ASKING SMITH TO SURRENDER POWER TO US. HE MAY SHARE IN POWER WHICH BELONGS TO ALL OF THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE OF WHICH HE IS A PART." IN SHORT, SMITH HAD TO SURRENDER TO THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE. HE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU THAT "WE HAVE ALL COME TO GENEVA TO SURRENDER POWER TO THE PEOPLE" AND IF SMITH WANTED TO CONTINUE HOLDING ANY POWER "THE FRUIT IS NOT RIPE." HE WAS PERSONALLY HURT BY STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT BECAUSE SMITH HAS HELD POWER IN THE PAST HE MUST CONTINUE TO DO SO. "OUR FRIENDS MUST NOT EXPECT A 50/50 ARRANGMENT WHEN THE WHITES ARE OUTNUMBERED 22 TO 1. WE WILL NOT AGREE TO ANYTHING AFTER GENEVA IN WHICH SMITH HOLDS A DOMINATE POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT." AFTER HEARING THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS INTENDED TO BE AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE, NKOMO BACKTRACKED BUT HE SAID THAT WE HAD TO UNDERSTAND THE COUNCIL OF STATE, AS DESCRIBED IN THE FIVE POINTS, GIVES SMITH AND WHITE RHODESIANS UNACCEPTABLE POWER. THE WHITES WILL BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE A CONSTITUTION WHICH IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO NATIONALISTS. THE FIVE POINTS LEAVE THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND NOT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN A DOMINATE POSITION AND THEREFORE ARE UNACCEPTABLE TO NKOMO.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 GENEVA 09664 041136Z

COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION I WAS STRUCK AGAIN AND AGAIN BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH NKOMO DISTRUSTED SMITH AND THE ROLE THAT HE COULD PLAY DURING TRANSITION. THE TONE OF HIS REMARKS REMINDED ME OF THE STATEMENT ARCHIE MOGWE, THE BOTSWANAN FOREIGN MINISTER, MADE TO ME IN THE MORNING. "IF SMITH WERE DEAD, THE NATIONALISTS WOULD PRICK HIM WITH NEEDLES AND WOULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EYES IF HE DID NOT WIGGLE." NKOMO IS CONVINCED THAT THE COUNCIL OF STATE ASSURES WHITE DOMINANCE AND IS THEREFORE ADAMANT IN HIS REJECTION OF AN UPPER TIER. HE CHOSE THE OCCASION OF OUR MEETING TO GIVE ME AN UNAMBIGUOUS MESSAGE THAT HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT UNDER ANY CONDITION POWER SHARING IN TERMS OF A TWO TIER GOVERNMENT. CATTO

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